REMARKS

Claims 2, 4-16, 18-19, and 21-44 are currently pending. Claims 2, 18, 26, 36, 38, 40, and 42 are currently amended. Claims 43-44 are added. Reconsideration of the action mailed May 31, 2006, is requested in light of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

The Examiner rejected claims 2, 4-16, 18-19, 24-26, 28-32, and 35-42 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0167310 ("Moody"). The Examiner rejected claims 33-34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Moody. The Examiner rejected claims 21-23 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Moody in view of Venolia et al., "Understanding Sequence and Reply Relationships within Email Conversations: A Mixed-Model Visualization" ("Venolia").

Section 102 Rejections

Claim 2 stands rejected over Moody. Applicant traverses the rejection.

Claim 2, as amended, is directed to a system for threading e-mail messages that includes creating an e-mail thread if a first e-mail message is determined to be related to a second e-mail message. The e-mail thread includes a thread header that has e-mail thread information derived from attributes of at least one of the e-mail messages in the e-mail thread. Information about received e-mail messages is displayed in a user interface. The thread header information is displayed in the user interface where the displayed thread header information is distinct from information displayed for individual e-mail messages and where <u>the thread header information is displayed in place of the information for the first e-mail message and the second e-mail message associated with the e-mail thread</u>.

Moody discloses a number of techniques for categorizing e-mail messages. *See* Abstract. In Moody, a technique is disclosed where e-mail threads are provided. Each received e-mail message is associated with a shadow document. *See* paragraph 64. The shadow document defines parent/child relationships for the e-mail message. *See* paragraphs 64-65 and 68. A conversation thread tree is derived by traversing the existing shadow documents and examining the parent/child relationships. *See* paragraphs 67 and 70.

The conversation thread can be displayed graphically as a hierarchy of related e-mail messages adjacent to an e-mail inbox. *See* paragraph 74; FIG.6A. For example, the graphical hierarchy is displayed adjacent to the inbox when a particular message is selected such that the graphical hierarchy shows a conversation tree associated with the selected message. *See* paragraph 79; FIG. 8A. Alternatively, Moody discloses an e-mail inbox where the selection of an individual e-mail results in the display highlighting other e-mail messages presented in the inbox that are within the conversation thread (*e.g.*, with a particular color). *See* paragraph 102; FIG. 9.

However, Moody does not disclose or suggest displaying thread header information in place of information for e-mail messages associated with the e-mail thread. The Examiner states that Moody discloses the claimed displaying at page 7, paragraph 79. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Paragraph 79 of Moody discloses a user interface as shown in FIG. 8. Paragraph 79 reads, in pertinent part, as follows:

> The user interface combines a traditional list of electronic mail messages 802 with a conversation tree 804. The node associated with the selected message 806 may be replaced with a reduced-resolution overview 808. Alternatively, the overview may be replaced with a window containing a summary of the electronic mail messages 802 and/or all or part of the conversation-thread tree 804, using the techniques described herein.

The cited paragraph describes the display of a tree representation of the threaded e-mail messages. As shown in FIG. 8, the conversation tree can be displayed adjacent to a listing of e-mail messages, such as an inbox. The conversation tree provides a graphical representation of related messages in the thread <u>in addition to</u> the display of the individual e-mail messages. Selecting a node in the tree causes a low resolution version of the content associated with the node (*e.g.*, a particular e-mail message) to be displayed. *See e.g.,* paragraph 75. In one disclosed alternative, a portion of the graphical representation of the conversation tree can be replaced by a summary of the content of the selected node message or a summary of all (or some) of the messages in the conversation tree. Thus, even when a summary is displayed, the individual e-mail message information remains displayed.

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The Examiner states that this display containing a summary of all or part of the electronic messages in the conversation tree discloses the displaying feature of claim 2. Applicant respectfully disagrees. A display including one or more summaries of e-mail messages does not disclose or suggest displaying thread header information. The thread header is distinct from a summary of one or more e-mail messages. The thread header information provides information about the particular e-mail thread and not specific information for individual e-mail messages.

Displaying a summary of one or more individual e-mail messages directly contrasts with the claimed displaying feature. In claim 2, the thread header information is displayed in place of information for the e-mail messages associated with the e-mail thread. The thread header information displays information about the thread as a whole derived from the e-mail messages of the thread so that the information about the individual e-mail messages in the e-mail thread is not displayed. In Moody, information about individual e-mail messages in the conversation thread is always displayed. The individual e-mail messages remain displayed in the e-mail inbox of FIG. 8A regardless of additional display of either the conversation tree or a summary. Additionally, the displayed summary summarizes individual e-mail messages, again displaying information about the individual messages. Therefore, Moody does not disclose or suggest displaying thread header information in place of information for individual e-mail messages associated with the e-mail thread, as required by claim 2.

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 2 as well as claims 8-12 and 35, which depend from claim 2, are in condition for allowance.

Claim 18 stands rejected over Moody. Applicant traverses the rejection.

Claim 18 is directed to a method for threading e-mail messages that includes displaying thread header information in a user interface where the thread header information is displayed in lieu of information for individual e-mail messages associated with the e-mail thread.

The Examiner again relies on paragraph 79 and FIG. 8A as disclosing the recited displaying. However, as discussed above, paragraph 79 and FIG. 8A both display information associated with individual e-mail messages of the thread in addition to the graphical representation of the thread. Moody does not disclose or suggest displaying thread header information in lieu of information for individual e-mail messages associated with the e-mail

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thread. For at least the same reasons as set forth above with respect to claim 2, claim 18 as well as claims 4-7 and 19-34, which depend from claim 18, are in condition for allowance.

Claim 26 stands rejected over Moody. Applicant traverses the rejection.

Claim 26 is directed to a method for threading e-mail messages including displaying an expansion icon associated with the thread header and responsive to a selection of the expansion icon displaying information about each e-mail message associated with the e-mail thread in the user interface. Moody does not disclose or suggest an expansion icon, which, when selected, displays information about each individual e-mail message associated with the e-mail thread.

The Examiner states that Moody discloses the recited feature at paragraphs 109-111. Applicant respectfully disagrees. The cited paragraphs disclose the use of folders to categorized e-mail messages from a user's inbox according to a predefined set of categories. *See* paragraph 109. An algorithm is used to identify the category or categories associated with an e-mail message using the e-mail message header information (*e.g.*, a message priority setting). *See* paragraph 110. Thus, e-mail messages are assigned categories relative to predefined criteria, not based on a relationship to other individual e-mail messages. Thus, the categories are not e-mail message threads of related e-mail messages; but instead are just folders having e-mail messages that comply with particular sorting criteria.

Icons can be selected to view the contents of a particular category. *See* paragraph 111. However, this simply displays all e-mail messages assigned to the category (*i.e.*, the contents of the folder). It does not display e-mail messages as part of a particular e-mail thread where the thread includes related e-mail messages. Therefore, the cited portions of Moody do not disclose or suggest an expansion icon which, when selected, displays information about individual e-mail messages associated with an e-mail thread.

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 26, as well as claims 27-28, which depend from claim 26, are in condition for allowance.

Claim 36 stands rejected over Moody. Applicant traverses the rejection.

Claim 36 is directed to a computer program product for threading e-mail messages that includes displaying the thread header information in a user interface where the thread header information is displayed in place of the information for each e-mail message associated with the

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e-mail thread. For at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1, claim 36 as well as claim 13-16 and 37, which depend from claim 36, are in condition for allowance.

Claim 38 stands rejected over Moody. Applicant traverses the rejection.

Claim 38 is directed to a system for threading e-mail messages that includes a display means operable to display information about received e-mail messages in a user interface where the thread header information is displayed and where the thread header information is displayed in place of the information for each e-mail message associated with the e-mail thread. For at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1, claim 38 as well as claim 39, which depends from claim 38, are in condition for allowance.

Claim 40 stands rejected over Moody. Applicant traverses the rejection.

Claim 40 is directed to a method for threading e-mail messages that includes creating an e-mail thread having a thread header and displaying the thread header. Moody does not disclose or suggest displaying a thread header.

The examiner mischaracterizes the claim language, stating that Moody discloses "displaying the e-mail thread" citing paragraph 79. Specifically, the examiner points to the portion of paragraph 79 discussed above that refers to replacing the conversation tree with summary information about an e-mail message or a summary of all or part of the conversation tree. However, displaying a summary of all or part of the thread is not the same as displaying a thread header. The claimed thread header includes e-mail thread information derived from attributes from at least one of a first or second e-mail message of the e-mail thread. The thread header is not the same a summary of the thread. Moody does not disclose or suggest presented a thread header. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 40, as well as claim 41, which depends from claim 40 is in condition for allowance.

Claim 42 stands rejected over Moody. Applicant traverses the rejection.

Claim 42 is directed to a method for threading e-mail messages that includes displaying a display item indicating a nature of the relationship between the first e-mail message and the second e-mail message and where the display item is displayed in place of the first e-mail message and the second e-mail message. As discussed above, Moody does not disclose or suggest displaying information in place of individual e-mail messages. For at least the same reasons as set forth above with respect to claim 2, claim 42 is in condition for allowance.

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New Claims

Independent claim 43 is added. Claim 43 is directed to a method for threading e-mail messages that includes determining that a first e-mail message is related to a second e-mail message. Determining if the messages are related includes identifying whether a subject field of the first e-mail message and the subject field of the second e-mail message include common data. If the subject field includes common data, determining whether the second e-mail message includes a message identifier included in the first e-mail message.

Moody does not disclose or suggest the recited feature of claim 43. Moody discloses using an algorithm to determine if a message is new or a reply to an existing message. *See* paragraph 68. The algorithm determines this by identifying whether the message has an "in-reply-to" header OR whether the subject lines of the message match an existing message. *See* paragraph 68. Moody does not disclose or suggest first identifying whether a subject field includes common data and if so, determining whether the second e-mail message includes a message identifier included in the first e-mail message. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 43, as well as claim 44, which depends from claim 43, are in condition for allowance.

Applicant respectfully requests that all pending claims be allowed.

By responding in the foregoing remarks only to particular positions taken by the examiner, the applicant does not acquiesce with other positions that have not been explicitly addressed. In addition, the applicant's arguments for the patentability of a claim should not be understood as implying that no other reasons for the patentability of that claim exist.

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Respectfully submitted,

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